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A New Year Prayer

“Men are agonizing over passion and prejudice, both real and seeming injustice and inequality, and the blackness of despair would settle over our land were it not that faith, hope and charity still abide—faith that a deeper knowledge of the wisdom of our institutions will be imparted to every son and daughter of the republic; hope that more and more all men will turn from the contemplation of their rights to a consideration of their duties, and charity for all who are not vicious, but who, through stress of circumstances, have become embittered.

God of our fathers, take from us, if Thou wilt, material prosperity and national glory, but give us individually and collectively all the years to come faith, hope and charity.”

others, to the community. A nation of independent, liberty-loving individuals—as we are—will not be stampeded into communism. If we mistake not, a reaction from the communistic trend has already set in.

We believe in a world safe for democracy. But a democracy, as our race conceives it, respects the rights of the individual and gives him opportunity to cultivate his capacities—for the ultimate good of the whole. But this is no time for easy-going tolerance, for temporizing with red-shirt radicals. The great tradition of ordered liberty and progress is our proudest, most precious heritage. We refuse to be forced to the level of the common herd. We are human beings with God-given attributes and rights. We are not animals to be corralled by Russian or Prussian communism. We cling to the political and social philosophy of an Anglo-Saxon ancestry. We have not that individual cowardice and spirit of shirking which tends to communism. 'Tis man's God-given duty and privilege to work out his own destiny.

The individual should regard the welfare of the community, but there must and will be a due recognition of the individual's rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Edward Kidder Graham: Teacher and Interpreter of Modern Citizenship*

LOUIS R. WILSON

In 1909, in an address delivered before the North Carolina Teachers' Assembly on "The Teacher and Modern Democracy," Edward Kidder Graham, then professor of English at the University, employed these significant words:

"The best teacher I ever had, I think, the one that brought me to myself and took me out of the ranks of the 'undesirables,' was a man who knew less than any teacher I ever had. He did not know enough to 'work' 9th grade arithmetic, or translate the fables in Harkness' first Latin book; yet he gave to every boy in his room the ideal of liberal citizenship for his possession, and the ambition to make the most of himself for the sake of the State."

Again, in 1911, as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, in an essay entitled, "A North Carolina Teacher," written in loving appreciation of his former teacher, the late Professor Thomas Hume, he challenged a statement of Professor Barrett Wendell, of Harvard University, in these significant words: "He is a sadly astray guide who calls teaching 'a sterile field.' That will not be true until pliable humanity is worn down to a breed of barren metal. Experience reveals a different display of facts. Few of the achievements of men have been solitary triumphs. They were first laid with words of grateful discipleship at the feet of some teacher."

Again, in 1914, in his inaugural address, when he was assuming in solemn assembly the high duties of the first

*Read before the North Carolina State Literary and Historical Association, Raleigh, N. C., November 22d.

teacher of the State, and as such was making clear the function of the institution over which he had been called to preside, he said: "The professions of law, medicine, the ministry, journalism, commerce, and the rest are essential to the upbuilding of a democratic commonwealth; but they must be interpreted, not as adventures in selfish advancement, but as enterprises in constructive statesmanship, liberating both the state and the man. It is the function of the university, not only to train men in the technique of the law, but to lift them to a higher level of achievement by making them living epistles of social justice; not only to make clever practitioners of medicine, but to lift them into conservators of the public health; not merely to train teachers in the facts and methods of education, but"—your attention is particularly directed to this sentiment—"but to fire them with the conviction that they are the productive creators of a new civilization."

And, still again, in the tense autumn of 1917, to his fellow-teachers in annual assembly, after America had taken up the gauge of battle in defense of human liberty, and looking with rare penetration beyond the vale of bitter conflict to the present hour of victory, he said: "We are to form after this war, as men have after every great human upheaval, a new concept of what it means to be a good man and a good citizen.

"The need of the world for intelligent and sympathetic leadership that constitutes the distinctive service of teaching makes freshly luminous the great and joyous job we have to do in the world, and gives to us a new inspiration for doing it superlatively well.

"The world is unifying itself in this terrible ordeal of fire to write, not for us alone, but for all mankind, a new chapter in progress in new terms of the divine nature of human life, through which, under God, we shall have a new birth of material and spiritual freedom. And of this, that is nothing

less than a new center of gravity of all human conduct, the priest and prophet of democracy, whether peaceful or militant, is the teacher in the schools of the nation."

These terse sentences, ladies and gentlemen, taken from four notable addresses delivered within the decade 1909-1918, in which Graham's genius for leadership and rare eloquence fired the imagination of the State and gripped the thinking of the nation, set forth in focal light the high ideal that he cherished for himself—that of becoming in full truth teacher and interpreter of the larger citizenship. They reveal the heart of the great matter at which he wrought from the time he received the priceless possession from the hands of his unlettered teacher until in the full flower of his strength he was called to pass in on to other hands.

It is to the development of this theme, therefore, this conception of the teacher-interpreter, and to the applications which he made of it in his notable career as educational statesman, that I shall devote myself in the moments you have so generously given me as your representative on this occasion to pay tribute to his high service.

Graham was no believer in what he was pleased to style the "pouring in" process of teaching, the process of presenting the data of learning without fusing it with life and spirit. To know the date at which Shakespeare wrote "The Tempest," or to be familiar with the legendary sources from which the Hamlet story was drawn, were not for him the essentials in the study of the master dramatist. To teach these wonderful plays in this spiritless, routine way was to miss the enchanting beauty of the one, and leave the Hamlet out of the other. On the contrary he held that instructor to be most of worth who utilized the media of instruction, whether the classics, the applied sciences, or vocational subjects, as agencies by means of which the student found himself. The mastery of the body of facts involved was essential,

to be sure, but not the highest end. In his classroom he taught his students English literature, but while doing this the real objective which he had in mind was not that his pupils should acquire the data of literature, but its spirit; not that he should so drill them that they might pass the examinations set, but that in the light of new and higher standards first seen in the illumined page of some master spirit, they might so examine and discipline and relate themselves to the task of the hour as to learn the fine art of true living. In 1915, in an address to the student body at the opening of the University, he summarized his thought as to where instruction and training should lead in these words:

“No student is truly trained unless he has learned to do pleasantly, and promptly, and with clear-cut accuracy every task he has obligated himself to do; . . . unless he puts into his work his own personal curiosities and opens his faculties to a lively and original interest in his work that leads him to test for himself what he is told; . . . unless he gets from his contact with the master spirits of the race those qualities of taste and behavior and standards of judgment that constitute a true gentleman; . . . unless he realizes that he does not live to himself alone, but is a part of an organic community life that is the source of most of the privileges he enjoys.” Continuing the theme a year later to another incoming class, and phrasing it differently, he said: “To become a true University man . . . does not mean the abandonment of any legitimate sort of happiness whatever, nor the loss of any freedom. The adventure of discovering and liberating one’s mind, far from being a dull and dreary performance, is the most thrilling of all youthful adventures. There is no question of self-punishment or external discipline, but only the freedom of becoming one’s own master, instead of a slave to the tyranny of one’s low and cheap desires. To come into this insight is to see this

organized discovery of the mind that we call education, not as learning, but as a love of knowledge; not as a matter of being industrious, but of loving industry; not as a matter of giving us a good start toward a middle-age success, but to enable us to keep growing, and so lay hold on the eternal spring of life."

Graham was an idealist in the truest sense. But he was also a pragmatist remarkably successful in combining his ideals in a program in which they could be realized. As such, he was not merely content to present ideals to his students, to interpret for them the finer things of the spirit, to point the way to larger citizenship. He went a step further and demonstrated the way by which they could begin to realize their ideals for themselves. He solved this problem, which to most teachers proves a stone of offense, by calling upon the student body to become a self-governing group, to put the ideal of good citizenship to work on their own campus; to discover for themselves the relationships which they should sustain to the University and to one another, and then so safeguard and respect them as to perfect and make workable the democracy which they constituted—a thing which, under his inspirational guidance, so challenged their imagination and hearts as to result in the disappearance of prodding discipline and the establishment of ideal standards of student conduct. He began by presenting to his students the facts of literature. His task was ended only when at some later day there stood before him the self-discovered, self-disciplined, self-governing student-citizen-to-be.

Graham's conception of the function of the University—a conception which won for him immediate recognition as a new type of virile constructive educational leader—was of the same sort. He conceived of it as an aggregate of teachers and interpreters fused into the State's chief instrument, not merely for assisting local students in acquiring a body of

learning and finding themselves, but also for carrying truth to every citizen of the commonwealth. He would have it not only carry information to those who sought it, but through the information thus carried would so enrich the inner life of those to whom the truth was borne that they would find their chief happiness in making the common good more widely prevail.

Graham's program for the schools and colleges of the nation during the stress of war was similar. The war simply clarified and intensified his conception of their task. Their function had always been to furnish men ideals by which to live, and, if need be, die. In the nation's supreme ordeal of fire it was the same. This was their birthright and most sacred duty. Theirs, above all others, was the coveted privilege of posting on the lintels of the nation the undying principles of justice, freedom, and brotherhood for which America has stood, and for which, in the face of fire and sword, and death, she would ever stand. In three moving addresses delivered during the war period before teacher audiences—"Certain War-Time Duties of Teachers," "Patriotism and the Schools," "The American University and the New Nationalism"—he proclaimed them the sources of morale, the deep springs of spirit and sublime faith through which the youth of America destined for the fields of France would prove equal to their task. So firm was his convictions that this was the high privilege of American colleges, and so confident was he that his Alma Mater had availed herself of it and had made spirit vital in the hearts of her sons; so confident was he of this, it was possible for him, on an October morning forever memorable in the annals of American education, to say to his soldier-students—our sons and brothers: "The spirit of this campus, the spirit of our State and country, the spirit of the world to-day assure to us the

continuing courage and complete devotion that will bring to a glorious fulfillment the noblest adventure that ever called to the aspiring spirit of youth."

Extending this theory of instruction beyond the walls of the schoolroom, or college, or university, where students under skilled guidance could be led to the discovery of themselves, President Graham, in notable addresses before this association, the North Carolina Social Conference, the Teachers' Assembly, the American Bankers' Association, and other State and national organizations, carried the same message to banker, and editor, and lawyer, and farmer. Again and again he called upon men in all professions and all callings to make the discovery of themselves through their work, even though that work was infinitely removed from the classroom. From a hundred platforms, and with compelling eloquence, he urged them to consider their tasks in all their relations to the public welfare; for achievement in medicine, achievement in banking, achievement in agriculture, touched with fine feeling and accompanied by a genuine desire to find truth, he held, becomes culture and leads to the true art of living, to perfect citizenship. The Apostle Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, declared that the law had been given to serve as schoolmaster to prepare men for the new and better dispensation. Edward Kidder Graham, in that remarkably illuminating essay, "Culture and Commercialism," declared with gripping conviction, that work, that achievement, that the daily task, when approached with open mind and sincere heart, become the teacher, the interpreter of the higher life, the larger citizenship; and the numerous addresses following it, such as "Culture, Agriculture, and Citizenship," "Higher Education and Business," "Banking and the Larger Citizenship," "Prosperity and Patriotism," and the call to North Carolina to spend a week in the study of civic problems, were but applications of this fundamental

principle to specific cases. This, ladies and gentlemen, was the message he brought to the classroom and the campus of the University; this was the gospel of sweetness and light to the furtherance of which he brought the quickening power of his magnetic personality and the resources of the State's great democratic institution. And this is the vineyard in which he would have us go work to-day.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have not set down in this memorial record any of the data of Graham's brilliant career: of his life as a student on the campus, of his distinctive service as professor and dean, of the high position in the sisterhood of American universities to which he brought his Alma Mater, and of the significant recognition he quickly won in the field of national leadership. I have not spoken of his inspiring personality, or of those radiant qualities of mind and heart by which he drew and bound men to him as with cords of steel; or of the glow of comprehending friendship felt by those who shared with him the joyous companionship of his fireside. Nor have I referred, except by inference, to the fervor of his eloquence by which he moved the hearts of men, or to his deft skill in words with which he clothed his thought. And until now I have left unnoted, except in casual way, the all-too-compressed sheaf of essays and occasional papers which came from his pen in leisure hours—such as "The Poetry of John Charles McNeil," "A North Carolina Teacher," "The Essays of Dr. Crothers," "The Reading of Children," "The Greatness of Two Great Men," "Happiness"—papers characterized by grace and playful humorousness of style, the counterpart of his more militant mood, and expressive of his fine spirituality and large *humanhood*.

Since his death, other members of this association, from various platforms and through publications of wide circulation, have paid loving tribute to him as teacher, executive, interpreter of culture and democracy, as leader in State and

nation, as speaker and writer of virile power, and as radiant personality and inspirer of men. Furthermore, yours has been the fortune, as well as mine, to walk with him, teacher and interpreter of the citizenship of the new day, in joyous comradeship, and you, as well as I, know how far short words fail to portray the values of a life which can best be described in terms of spirit or pure flame. Therefore, I have held myself to the strict limitations assigned me by your Secretary. And so, in this tense hour, this time of turmoil and pregnant flux, when men, for personal or class advantage, forget the relations of their tasks to the public welfare; this moment of the nation's peril when clear-visioned leaders such as he are required to catch up and bear aloft the torch now fallen from his hands, I would remind us of the teacher he found worthy of highest honor—the teacher who could not work the problems of 9th grade arithmetic or translate the simplest Latin fables, but sent every one of his pupils out into life with an ideal of citizenship and an ambition to be and do something worth while for the State. In this moment when we seek to pay honor to his memory here where he served us and his State and country, I would remind us of the great lesson which he, as the teacher and interpreter of the larger citizenship, would have us learn, and to which, in these clear, ringing words, he called us:

“Where shall we begin this necessary task of realizing our dream of commonwealth that will be satisfied with nothing less than the common weal of all? Where, but here and now? Nothing can act but where it is. Our greatest lesson is to learn that these streets and stores and fields—the earth and the sky in all of their daily manifestations—are but ‘folds across the face of God’; that the ‘Thy will’ for which we daily pray will be done here and now or nowhere; and that agriculture, business, freedom, education, and religion are but instruments in our hands for finding the common God in the common good and making His will prevail.”